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LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES H. DOOLITTLE, USAFR

James Harold Doolittle was born in Alameda, California, December 14, 1896. He was educated in Nome, Alaska; Los Angeles Jr. College; and spent three years at the University of California School of Mines.

Enlisting as a Flying Cadet in the Signal Corps Reserve October 6, 1917, General Doolittle was assigned to the School of Military Aeronautics at the University of California, and upon completion of that course went to Rockwell Field, California, for further training. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Signal Corps Reserve, Aviation Section, March 11, 1918.

During 1918 General Doolittle served at Camp Dick, Texas; Wright Field, Ohio, Gerstner Field, Louisiana; and as flight and gunnery instructor at Rockwell Field, and in July 1919 he was assigned to the 104th Aero Squadron at Kelly Field, Texas. That October 9th he was transferred to the 90th Aero Squadron at Eagle Pass, Texas, for border patrol duty.

On July 1, 1920, General Doolittle was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Regular Army, Air Service; was promoted to first lieutenant; and entered the Air Service Mechanical School at Kelly Field. In August 1922 he was sent to the Aviation Engineering School at McCook Field, Ohio. That September 4 and 5 he made the first cross-country flight, from Pablo Beach, Florida, to San Diego, California, with one stop, which brought him international fame. Also during 1922 he was awarded his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California.

Entering Massachusetts Institute of Technology for special engineering courses in July 1923, General Doolittle was graduated in 1924 with the degree of Master of Science, and the following year was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science. During March 1924 he also served temporarily at McCook Field conducting aircraft acceleration tests. Returning to McCook Field in June 1925, he was sent to the Naval Air Station at Washington, D. C. that August for special training in flying high speed seaplanes. During that assignment he served for a short period at Mitchell Field, New York, with the Joint Army-Navy Test Board.

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Granted a leave of absence in April 1926, General Doolittle went to South America on airplane demonstration flights. After his return to the United States he was in Walter Reed General Hospital until April 1927, when he was again assigned to McCook Field for experimental work and additional duty as instructor with the Organized Reserves of the Fifth Corps Area 385th Bomb Squadron. In January 1928 he made flights in South America, which were arranged by the Department of the Army, Navy, State, and Commerce.

Returning to Mitchell Field in September 1928, General Doolittle directed the development of fog flying equipment. During this assignment the now almost universally used artificial horizontal and directional gyroscopes were developed and the first flight completely by instruments was accomplished. On January 20, 1930, he was named advisor for the Army on the building of the Floyd Bennett Airport in New York City. General Doolittle resigned his Regular Army commission February 15, 1930.

On March 5, 1930, General Doolittle was commissioned a major, Specialist, in the Officers Reserve Corps, and during that year he made several instrument flying experiments. He was then named manager of the Aviation Department, Shell Oil Company, and in that capacity conducted numerous aviation tests. At various times he went on active duty with the Army to conduct tests, and in 1932 set the world's high speed record for land planes. In April 1934 he was appointed a member of the Army Board to study Air Corps organization, and a year later he was transferred to the Air Corps Reserve. General Doolittle became President of the Institute of Aeronautical Science in 1940.

Ordered to active duty July 1, 1940, General Doolittle was Assistant District Supervisor of the Central Air Corps Procurement District at Indianapolis, Indiana, moving to Detroit, Michigan, in that capacity November 16, 1940, where he worked with the large automobile manufacturers on the conversion of automobile plants to airplane parts manufacturing plants. The following August he went to England as a member of a special mission. On January 9, 1942, he was assigned to Army Air Force headquarters in Washington, D. C.

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General Doolittle led the first aerial raid on the Japanese mainland on April 18, 1942. That July he joined the Eighth Air Force in England, and the following September assumed command of the 12th Air Force in North Africa. In March 1943 he became commanding general of the 15th Air Force in the Mediterranean Theater, and from January 1, 1944 to September 1945 he commanded the Eighth Air Force in the European and Pacific Theaters. On May 10, 1946, he reverted to inactive reserve status.

Returning to the Shell Oil Company, General Doolittle was made a vice-president and director. In March 1951 he was appointed a Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force at Washington, D. C., in a civilian status.

His decorations include the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star, and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. General Doolittle has also been awarded the British Order of the Bath (Knight Commander); French Legion of Honor (Grand Officer); Belgian Order of the Crown (Grand Officer) and Croix de Guerre with Palm; Polish Order of Restoration of Poland; Chinese Yun-Hwei (Class III); Bolivian Order of the Condor Medal; and Ecuadorean Abdon Calderon (First Class.) His trophies include the Schneider and Mackay Trophies of 1925; the Harmon Trophy in 1930; the Bendix Trophy in 1931; and the Thompson Trophy in 1932.

General Doolittle and his wife, Josephine, have two children, James H., Jr., and John P., both in the Air Force.

PROMOTIONS

Commissioned a second lieutenant (SERC) March 11, 1918; second lieutenant (Regular Army) July 1, 1920; to first lieutenant (permanent) July 1, 1920; resigned February 15, 1930. Major (Specialists Reserve) March 5, 1930; transferred to Air Corps Reserve April 4, 1935; promoted to lieutenant colonel (temporary) January 2, 1942; to brigadier general (temporary) April 28, 1942; to major general (temporary) November 20, 1942; to lieutenant general (temporary) March 13, 1944; to brigadier general (Regular Army) May 1, 1946; resigned July 1946.

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